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By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

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GMA NEWS

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By: Benjamin Legendre

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Marcos to tackle trade, labor, energy, climate change in Germany visit](#)

By: Julie M. Aurelio

Apart from expanded maritime trade, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz will tackle labor opportunities, climate change, and renewable energy during the former's working visit here this week.

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By: Zeus Legaspi

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THE MANILA TIMES

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[WWF-PH urges Filipinos to join Earth Hour 2024](#)

By: Claire Bernadette Mondares

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF-Philippines), in partnership with the city government of Manila, has called on Filipinos to join the Earth Hour 2024 switch-off event on March 23.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[In climate push, German chemical maker swaps oil for sugar](#)

By: Jean-Philippe Lacour - Agence France-Presse

At one of Europe's largest chemical complexes, German group Covestro is trialling the manufacture of a key product using sugar as a base material instead of oil, as the industry seeks to reduce its carbon footprint.

[MCIA commended for receiving the 'Carbon' accreditation](#)

By: Caecent No-ot Magumbol -

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia-Frasco has lauded the Mactan Cebu International Airport (MCIA) for its Carbon accredited status that paves the way for a cleaner, greener future in the aviation and tourism industry.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Climate change body boosts policy-making partnership with academe](#)

By: Pot Chavez

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) is working on a collaboration project with research centers in the academe to help formulate policies to address environmental concerns.

POLICE FILES TONITE

[Policy Expo 2024, tinalakay ang pagsisikap para solusyunan ang Climate Change at Food Security](#)

By: Jocelyn Domenden

Dahil sa lumalalang problema sa pagbabago ng klima, nakikipagtulongan ang Climate Change Commission sa ilang mga mananaliksik, akademya, at iba pang grupo upang maisakatuparan ang implimentasyon ng mga proyekto at polisiya sa pagtugon ng mga pangunahing alalahanin kaugnay sa nasabing usapin.

REMATE

[Bayanihan lunas sa lumalalang Climate Change](#)

By: Jay Reyes

“SAMA-SAMA tayo, isa lang ang kalaban natin, ang kalaban natin ay ang climate change.”

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

Alliance Global Group eyes 100-percent renewable energy use for Megaworld, Newport World Resorts; taps Meralco's MPower

Andrew Tan's Alliance Global Group Inc. (AGI), through its companies Megaworld and Newport World Resorts operator Travellers International Hotel Group, has tapped MVP-led MPower of Meralco to achieve its goal of sourcing 100 percent of its power requirements from renewable energy this year.

MPower is set to supply a total of 100 megawatts of renewable energy to around 70 property developments of both Megaworld and Newport World Resorts.

Leading the ceremonial signing of the landmark deal were Kevin Andrew L. Tan, chief executive officer of AGI (second from left) and Manuel V. Pangilinan, chairman and CEO of Meralco (second from right).

Witnessing the signing were Lourdes T. Gutierrez-Alfonso, chief operating officer of Megaworld (left) and Redel M. Domingo, first vice president and head of MPower.

[PhilSA, DENR launch nationwide mangrove mapping project](#)

Two government agencies partner for environmental management through nationwide mangrove mapping with the use of satellite images and space data.

The Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) recently launched the Nationwide Mangrove Mapping initiative at the Social Hall of the DENR Central Office in Quezon City, PhilSA announced.

PhilSA, in partnership with the DENR, produced the Nationwide Mangrove Map using remotely-sensed images from Sentinel-2 and Alos Palsar2.

The map will undergo a validation process to enhance the reliability and applicability of data to support coastal management, conservation efforts, and scientific research.

With the development of the satellite-derived mangrove extent map and commencement of the ground validation phase for the nationwide mangrove mapping, PhilSA Director General Joel Joseph Marciano Jr. highlighted the importance of this initiative in environmental management.

"Using satellite imagery and spaceborne data, we can develop the methodologies and algorithms to make more frequent and timely monitoring possible, and ultimately this should be directed toward supporting more sound decision making and policies," Marciano said in his keynote speech.

"We are given the ability to view remote and inaccessible areas from the vantage point of outer space, and again, we hope that this contributes science-based solutions. We are also happy to be given the opportunity to build the capacities of fellow Filipinos in space science and technology, which we hope will build our local industry and important space downstream sectors," he added.

PhilSA remains committed to supporting the enhancement of DENR's monitoring systems through satellite remote sensing, machine learning, artificial intelligence, and geographic information systems.

The Agency also looks forward to expanding its contributions to include other DENR priority sectors.

Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga highlighted the importance of synergies between the two agencies.

“The use of space-based technologies in national development cannot be underestimated and the [PhilSA] under the current leadership of Doctor Marciano has been an invaluable help to the [DENR] in quantifying and measuring what we treasure as a nation.”

As the collaborative effort represents a significant stride toward effective mangrove conservation and rehabilitation, Yulo-Loyzaga added, “With the help of our partner agencies and academic community, and nongovernment organizations [NGOs], we reiterate the DENR’s firm commitment to establish natural capital accounts which equals integrating key ecosystems like mangrove forests into building a sustainable and thriving blue economy for the country. The launching of the mangrove map is a major milestone for us to accomplish this goal.”

A hands-on session for data validation was conducted and facilitated by Engr. Kristine Bantay, Senior Science Research Specialist from the PhilSA Space Data Mobilization and Applications Division.

Bantay also presented how the mangrove map may be validated through the utilization of ODK, a free application for data collection.

Through ODK, local DENR offices, NGOs, and academe partners will be mobilized to acquire and contribute data, such as image and location of various mangrove areas in the country for ground validation.

These efforts will also be complemented by aerial images using drone technology, which are expected to further enhance the nationwide mangrove extent map.

Upon completion of the validation activity, the data will be used to enhance PhilSA’s mangrove mapping algorithm using machine learning.

The validated map can be used for conservation and resource management efforts.

Present during the event were the Global Mangrove Alliance, De La Salle University, University of Sto. Tomas, National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau, and representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in environmental conservation and advocacy.

This endeavor was a result of the PhilSA and DENR MOA signed in February 2023.

A key component of the project is the establishment of a geospatial database of the country's natural resources to be developed for the National Resource Accounting Program starting with the Nationwide Mangrove Map, PhilSA said.

Experts: Global action needed to protect, conserve migratory species, systems

By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

A landmark United Nations report that was released recently reveals the shocking state of wildlife, with particular focus on the world's migratory species that are rapidly on a decline and increasing global extinction risk.

The first ever report was launched by the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) of Wild Animals, a UN biodiversity treaty at the UN Wildlife Conservation Conference.

While some migratory species listed under the CMS are improving, the report said that nearly half, or 44 percent, are showing population decline.

CMS-listed species are “those at risk of extinction across all or much of their range, or in need of coordinated international action to boost their conservation status.”

Around 22 percent of CMS-listed species are threatened with extinction.

Even more alarming is that nearly all, or 97 percent of CMS-listed fish, are threatened with extinction.

It says the extinction risk is growing for migratory species globally, including those not listed under the CMS.

Unprotected KBAs

Half or 51 percent of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) identified as important for CMS-listed migratory animals do not have protected area status, the report said.

Likewise, 58 percent of the monitored sites recognized as being important for CMS-listed species are experiencing unsustainable levels of human-caused pressure.

According to the report, the two greatest threats to both CMS-listed and all migratory species are overexploitation and habitat loss due to human activity, with three out of four CMS-listed species are impacted by habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, and seven out of 10 CMS-listed species are impacted by overexploitation, including intentional taking as well as incidental capture.

Climate change, pollution, invasive species

Other factors contributing to the population decline are climate change, pollution and invasive species.

Lastly, it says 399 migratory species threatened or near threatened with extinction are not CMS-listed species.

“Today’s report clearly shows us that unsustainable human activities are jeopardizing the future of migratory species—creatures which not only act as indicators of environmental change but play an integral role in maintaining the function and resilience of our planet’s complex ecosystems,” Inger Andersen, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme, said in a statement.

“The global community has an opportunity to translate this latest science of the pressures facing migratory species into concrete conservation action. Given the precarious situation of many of these animals, we cannot afford to delay, and must work together to make the recommendations a reality,” Andersen added.

International commitment

The report highlights the need for global action to protect and conserve the world’s migratory species.

The Philippines, being part of the Asean, a region rich in biodiversity, is expected to do its part to address the increasing number of threats to both species and their habitats.

Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim underscored the importance of protecting migratory species in Southeast Asia.

Interviewed via Messenger on February 27, Lim said that the whale shark, all marine turtle species, and threatened migratory birds, such as the black-faced spoonbill, the bar-tailed godwit and the Christmas frigate are the migratory species that need special attention.

“Humpback whales and orcas are also found in Philippine waters, and are very charismatic and considered indicators of healthy marine ecosystems,” said Lim, a licensed veterinarian.

Important role

“Because the Philippines is at the heart of the East Asian Australasian Flyway, our role is important in ensuring the safe passage of important migratory birds moving from the Northern to the Southern hemisphere and back. Their survival as they travel depends on available and healthy ecosystems for feeding and watering, and reduced threats from hunting and poaching during their stop-over,” Lim said.

“The same with marine turtles, migratory sharks, and whales, their presence means ecosystems are still healthy enough to support their food supply. Turtles that depend on coastal ecosystems to nest, require minimally disturb beach areas,” Lim said.

Protecting migratory animals

The Philippines’ Department of Environment and Natural Resources through its Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) plays a central role in the effective implementation of the CMS by ensuring the fulfillment of Philippine obligations as a Party to the Convention.

Particularly, the DENR-BMB is serving as the oversight agency of the DENR on all initiatives toward the conservation of migratory species in the country, effectively liaising with international and local partners in this regard.

“Initiatives on the conservation of migratory species under the Convention primarily focus on affording protection to the species listed in the CMS appendices,” Anson M. Tagtag, chief of the Wildlife Resources Division of the DENR-BMB told the BusinessMirror via email on March 1.

By hosting several migratory birds, marine turtles and mammals, and sharks and rays, the Philippines has been an active Party of the CMS since 1993 and a signatory of three Memoranda of Understanding, a less formal instrument for cooperation among range states of certain migratory species.

The initiatives being undertaken by the country focus on various areas including awareness raising, mainstreaming of migratory species in other sectors and processes, governance and policy development, implementation of area-based conservation measures, addressing threats and measures affecting migratory species, data management, capability building, strengthening partnerships to conserve migration systems and resource mobilization.

Migratory shore birds, seabirds

The conduct of the Asian Waterbird Census and initiatives in partnership with international organizations, such as the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership, aims to protect migratory birds and their habitats.

To further protect migratory birds and other wildlife, the DENR-BMB has been implementing measures like the designation of Protected Areas and Critical Habitats alongside the regulation of activities that may jeopardize not only migratory birds but also other wildlife and their habitats.

The Philippines also regularly participates in global campaigns, such as World Migratory Bird Day, emphasizing its proactive role in the international community's efforts to protect migratory birds and their ecosystems.

Tagtag said the DENR-BMB is currently in the process of crafting a comprehensive Species Conservation Action Plan for Seabirds, recognizing the diverse ecological significance of seabirds and the challenges they confront.

"Although not all seabirds are migratory, this plan seeks to address the unique conservation needs of these avian species," he said.

Migratory fish, other marine species

Meanwhile, the DENR BMB actively protects migratory fish and other marine species through the effective implementation of the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP) and BMB Technical Bulletin 2017-14, titled "Guidelines on the Application of Integrated Coastal Management as a Strategy in the Implementation of the CMEMP."

"This comprehensive approach entails preserving ecosystem functions within coastal ecosystems, promoting sustainable fisheries management, and spearheading the protection and rehabilitation of important habitats such as coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds, and estuaries," he explained.

"Key conservation actions include the establishment of Marine Protected Areas, nature reserves, and sanctuaries, ensuring the long-term viability of marine biodiversity," Tagtag added.

The DENR-BMB also implements targeted conservation measures for marine turtles and dugongs, both of which fall under its jurisdiction as mandated by RA 9147.

These initiatives encompass a range of activities, including habitat protection, continuous monitoring, and engaging local communities in conservation efforts.

Biodiversity oversight body

Tagtag said the DENR-BMB's main task is the oversight of the nation's biodiversity through formulating and executing comprehensive policies and strategies for the conservation and sustainable management of biological diversity.

Its mandate includes the management of protected areas, nature reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, and critical habitats, and the provision of technical assistance to other law enforcement agencies on wildlife law enforcement, along with implementing programs dedicated to the protection and creating and maintaining habitats crucial for threatened and endemic species, including migratory species.

Along its mandate, the Bureau facilitates the integration of biodiversity conservation, including that of migratory species in the plans and programs of other government agencies, the private sector, and especially the local governments.

Boosting the conservation effort of government, the DENR-BMB is carrying out actions in various forms to increase the people's awareness of the value of migratory species, their habitats, and migration systems, including press and media publicity, special publications, and celebration of festivals on certain migratory species, exhibitions, and other events.

Some of these events are the Marine Turtle Festival, National Bird Festival, Whale Shark Festival, Month of the Ocean, World Wildlife Day, World Wetlands Day, International Day of Biological Diversity, World Migratory Bird Day, Shark Conservation Week, World Sea Turtle Day.

GMA NEWS

[February marks 9th straight month of record-smashing global heat — climate monitor](#)

By: Benjamin Legendre

Last month was the warmest February on record globally, the ninth straight month of historic high temperatures across the planet as climate change steers the world into "uncharted territory", Europe's climate monitor said Thursday.

The last year has seen an onslaught of storms, crop-withering drought and devastating fires, as human-caused climate change -- intensified by the naturally-occurring El Niño weather phenomenon -- stoked warming to likely the hottest levels in over 100,000 years.

Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) service last month said the period from February 2023 to January 2024 marked the first time Earth had endured 12 consecutive months of temperatures 1.5 degrees Celsius hotter than the pre-industrial era.

That trend has continued, it confirmed in its latest monthly update, with February as a whole 1.77C warmer than the monthly estimate for 1850-1900, the pre-industrial reference period.

Temperatures spiked across swathes of the planet in February, from Siberia to South America, with Europe also registering its second warmest winter on record.

In the first half of the month, daily global temperatures were "exceptionally high", Copernicus said, with four consecutive days registering averages 2C higher than pre-industrial times -- just months after the world registered its first single day above that limit.

This was the longest streak over 2C on record, said C3S director Carlo Buontempo, adding the heat was "remarkable".

But it does not mark a breach of the 2015 Paris climate deal limit of "well below" 2C and preferably 1.5C, which is measured over decades.

Copernicus' direct data from across the planet goes back to the 1940s, but Buontempo said that taking into account what scientists know about historical temperatures "our civilization has never had to cope with this climate".

"In that sense, I think the definition of uncharted territory is appropriate," he told AFP, adding global warming posed an unprecedented challenge to "our cities, our culture, our transport system, our energy system".

Ocean records

Sea surface temperatures were the highest for any month on record, Copernicus said, smashing the previous heat extremes seen in August 2023 with a new high of just over 21C at the end of the month.

Oceans cover 70 percent of the planet and have kept the Earth's surface liveable by absorbing 90 percent of the excess heat produced by the carbon pollution from human activity since the dawn of the industrial age.

Hotter oceans mean more moisture in the atmosphere, leading to increasingly erratic weather, like fierce winds and powerful rain.

The cyclical El Nino, which warms the sea surface in the southern Pacific leading to hotter weather globally, is expected to fizzle out by early summer, Buontempo said.

He added that the transition to the cooling La Nina phenomenon may happen faster than expected, potentially decreasing the chances that 2024 will be another record-breaking year.

Fossil fueled heat

While the El Niño and other effects have played a role in the unprecedented recent heat, scientists stressed that the greenhouse gas emissions that humans continue to pump into the atmosphere were the main culprit.

The UN's IPCC climate panel has warned that the world will likely crash through 1.5C in the early 2030s.

Planet-heating emissions, mainly from the burning of fossil fuels, continue to rise when scientists say they need to fall by almost half this decade.

Countries at UN climate negotiations in Dubai last year agreed to triple global renewables capacity this decade and "transition away" from fossil fuels.

But the deal lacked important details, with governments now under pressure to strengthen their climate commitments in the short term and for beyond 2030.

"We know what to do -- stop burning fossil fuels and replace them with more sustainable, renewable sources of energy," said Friederike Otto, of the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment, Imperial College London.

"Until we do that, extreme weather events intensified by climate change will continue to destroy lives and livelihoods."

PCO

PH officials promoted investments on green metals processing during PBBM Australia visit

Philippine trade officials promoted investments in the processing of green metals during President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s visit to Australia last week, with a goal of setting up local minerals processing for added value, according to a trade official on Saturday.

“Sa recent visit po ni Presidente sa Australia, hinihikayat po natin, prinomote (promote) po natin ang mga investments po sa processing ng green metals,” Jollan Margaret Llana, the Department of Trade and Industry’s (DTI) Foreign Trade Service Officer, said in a news forum in Quezon City.

“Kung mapapansin ninyo po iyong Pilipinas ‘di ba very mountainous po iyong terrain, we’re very rich in green metals resources. So, iyong mga green metals po na ito katulad ng copper, cobalt, nickel, ito pong mga metals na ito ay very critical for the development and deployment of clean technologies katulad ng electric vehicles,” she said.

The current government thrust is to begin local processing of these minerals to ensure higher value and for greater benefit to the economy instead of just exporting ores, Llana said.

President Marcos reported that during his trip to Australia, he was able to secure 12 business agreements amounting to US\$1.53 billion or PhP86 billion, covering diverse sectors such as renewable energy, clean technology, and recycling solutions, housing, IT-BPM, infrastructure, medical devices, and digital health services.

According to Llana, the Marcos government wants investments that are consistent with its Strategic Investment Priorities Plan aimed at acquiring high technology from other countries.

“Iyong paggamit po ng bagong mga disruptive technologies katulad ng artificial intelligence, Big Data – gusto po natin iyon para rin po ma-upskill, reskill po natin ang ating talent workforce na inu-offer din po sa ating mga investors,” she said.

“And siyempre kasama rin po doon iyong transfer of technology para rin po iyong participation natin sa mga global value chains ay mas tumindi, or mas mag-improve pa,” she stressed.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Marcos to tackle trade, labor, energy, climate change in Germany visit](#)

By: Julie M. Aurelio

Apart from expanded maritime trade, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz will tackle labor opportunities, climate change, and renewable energy during the former's working visit here this week.

Philippine ambassador to Germany Irene Susan Natividad said these issues were "very important, mutual shared interests" to the two nations.

"I think the key to any bilateral relation is mutual or shared interests and values, and so we have several with Germany that can complement each other," she said in an interview with Radio Television Malacañang here.

"Climate and renewable energy will be part of their discussions since this is another issue that is very important for both the Philippines and Germany," Natividad added.

She noted that the two nations now have joint consultation platforms not just on political, economic, and labor but even on climate change issues.

"These joint consultation platforms provide us a mechanism to discuss and build on existing relations that have spanned 70 years and identify new areas of cooperation based on shared objectives," Natividad said.

The Philippines and Germany also share a mutual interest in their commitment to a rules-based international order, development cooperation, and peace and development projects in Mindanao.

Natividad described Marcos' visit – the first by a Philippine president in 10 years after then President Benigno S. Aquino III's visit here in 2014 – as a "business-focused, business-oriented working visit."

"He will address the German business community and inform them of all the reforms that the administration has undertaken to attract foreign investments into the country," she said.

Since Germany has a shortage in its workforce, the two leaders will likewise discuss ways to address the issue that may potentially mean more job opportunities for Filipinos.

“How can we help each other? The Philippines, how to help Germany address that labor shortage. And for Germany to assure us that the workers we will be sending here will be treated fairly, provided all the benefits and rights they should enjoy just like any other German national or other nationalities working in Germany,” Natividad said.

The Philippines can also tap into Germany’s status as a “powerhouse” in a diverse array of industries, not just the manufacture of automobiles.

“How can the Philippines help German industries by supplying whatever materials or products they need? Germany is a powerhouse in terms of innovation, manufacturing, not just automobiles but a lot of other products. We can tap into that,” the envoy added.

As to the issue of the West Philippine Sea dispute, Natividad stressed that Germany “has always been one of the first countries to call out aggressive actions and dangerous maneuvers and incidents in our seas.”

Marcos is expected to arrive in Berlin on Monday night for a two-day working visit here upon Scholz’s invitation.

Aside from a bilateral meeting with the German Chancellor, the President will attend a business forum of major companies in renewable energy, manufacturing, healthcare, aerospace, and innovation interested in investing in the Philippines.

Further, government-to-government agreements will be signed during Marcos’ brief visit – a joint declaration of intent to strengthen the Philippines and Germany’s cooperation in the maritime sector by facilitating maritime trade and mobility of commercial vessels.

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training will also sign a cooperation program to continue their partnership on technical and vocational education and training.

Marcos will likewise meet with the Filipino community in Berlin. Around 35,000 Filipinos are working in Germany’s healthcare, information technology, and hotel and hospitality industries.

[Rep. Tulfo slams DENR 'inaction' on Davao de Oro landslide](#)

By: Zeus Legaspi

House Deputy Majority Leader for Communications Rep. Erwin Tulfo criticized the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for its alleged inaction on the landslide that claimed 98 lives in Maco, Davao de Oro, in February.

In a statement on Sunday, Tulfo slammed the DENR and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) for supposedly not acting on the tragic landslide which occurred in a mining village.

"It happened in February before Valentine's. Now there are 98 dead in Maco, Davao De Oro, and there are still eight missing. So, the [toll] is going to be a hundred. The DENR didn't do anything, there's also nothing, you didn't hear anything from the MGB. So that means there is a problem here," Tulfo was quoted as saying in the statement.

The government official also lamented the purportedly slow response of the national government in addressing the landslide in Davao de Oro.

"That's why sometimes our government is criticized by our fellow citizens. It's very slow, it takes too long. Now that I'm in government, I feel like everything moves in slow motion," Tulfo noted.

The areas affected by the landslide in Maco town have been declared a "no-build zone" by its local government unit (LGU) since a landslide hit the area on Sept. 6 and 7, 2008, wherein 25 people were killed. The LGU's declaration followed a recommendation by the MGB.

"It means, there shouldn't be any structure there anymore. Don't build anything. If there's anything there, remove the people. Now, there are 98 dead. What are we going to do? Forget about it? Bury it in oblivion?" Tulfo asked.

"That's the problem, that's why we filed a resolution to investigate it. It was brought to the Committee on Disaster Resilience under Cong. [Alan] Ecleo," he added, saying that he would question the DENR and the MGB once the committee starts its probe on the incident.

Tulfo said that the House of Representatives would have time to investigate the landslide in Maco next week.

“Next week, Congressman Ecleo promised that we will start the investigation,” he noted.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Aurora families build climate-resilient homes](#)

Aurora was identified in a 2023 report by The Cross Dependency Initiative as among the provinces vulnerable to climate change. In response, the project, "Matibay na Bahay para sa mas Ligtas na Buhay," helped 37 families in the province's towns of Baler and Dipaculao to strengthen their houses against extreme weather. It raised awareness on the importance of climate-resilience building to more than 3,000 people. It provided access to housing loans to low-income families and employed 120 local masons.

The project was completed by building solutions provider Holcim Philippines Inc. in collaboration with nonprofit social innovator Build Change and microfinance institution Alalay sa Kaunlaran Foundation Inc. (ASKI).

Among the beneficiaries is Marissa Villaruz, whose family was trapped inside their house by floods caused by Typhoon "Lawin" in 2016. This traumatizing experience motivated her to participate in the program to strengthen their house by incrementally transitioning from timber to concrete.

Lily Lorenzo also joined the program to fix her house's leaking roof and stop the water seeping through the walls every time it rains.

Holcim Philippines has been helping families and community masons access additional knowledge on construction materials and practices to build decent, resilient yet affordable homes. Zoe Sibala, Holcim Philippines chief sustainability officer, said that Filipino families, especially those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, must be able to help themselves in building strong and safer homes. One way is to give them "access to financing ... coupled with the knowledge of building resiliently and the use of quality and low-carbon building materials."

Build Change developed a special training module on strengthening houses using Holcim's low-carbon cement products such as general purpose cement Excel ECOPlanet, masonry cement Wallright Prime and Superfine Skimcoat.

Since its post-disaster reconstruction following Typhoon "Yolanda" in 2013, Build Change has been working to prevent housing loss against future disasters. It has built 2,000 safer buildings for 40,000 people, trained over 4,700 individuals in safe construction practices and created 560 jobs.

ASKI, started in 1986 by Christian business leaders in Nueva Ecija to provide microfinancing access to small entrepreneurs, has been serving rural communities and overseas Filipino workers. With a portfolio of P1.7 billion with 98 branches in Regions 1 (Ilocos Region), 2 (Cagayan Valley) and 3 (Central Luzon), it has insured more than 800,000 members and their families.

[WWF-PH urges Filipinos to join Earth Hour 2024](#)

By: Claire Bernadette Mondares

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF-Philippines), in partnership with the city government of Manila, has called on Filipinos to join the Earth Hour 2024 switch-off event on March 23.

With the theme "Switch off Plastic Pollution, Give an Hour to Earth," the local observance of the event will be held at the Kartilya ng Katipunan, beside the Manila City Hall.

WWF-Philippines said Filipinos can help in efforts to solve two of the planet's biggest problems, biodiversity loss and climate change, by doing their part in conserving energy and putting an end to the problem of plastic pollution.

"Too many of us have forgotten that we are deeply connected with nature, but the way we live, the way we produce and consume, the way we create the spaces we live have made a tremendous impact on our environment, on biodiversity," WWF-Philippines Executive Director Katherine Custodio said during last Tuesday's media launch.

Custodio said this year's Earth Hour Philippines will focus on addressing plastic pollution, as it is one of the most pressing concerns for our country, which now has become a public health issue.

Citing an example, she said the country generates 2 million tons of plastic waste every year, of which only 9 percent is recycled and the other 35 percent leaks out into the open environment.

During the event, the public, as well as the management of national landmarks, office buildings and government offices, are encouraged to switch off their lights for one hour from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. to express their commitment to and solidarity with the cause of protecting and restoring the environment.

Last year, over 410,000 hours were given to the Earth with the support of 190 countries and territories joining the event.

The global observance of Earth Hour started as a symbolic event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007 and has since grown into one of the world's largest grassroots environmental movements, spanning over 7,000 cities and 193 countries and territories.

In 2008, the Philippines joined Earth Hour, marking 2024 its 16th year of being part of the global event.

From a symbolic lights-off event, Earth Hour has evolved into a movement that not only shines light on the issue of climate change but also on the importance of protecting the environment.

"Manila is honored to be hosting this year's Earth Hour celebration, especially with this year's focus on eradicating plastic pollution. As the country's capital, we're keen on using the influence we have in engaging other cities and Filipinos to do their part in saving the environment," Manila Mayor Maria Sheilah Lacuna-Pangan said.

On the other hand, Custodio said that Manila has signed up to be a Plastic Smart City, which means they commit to a 100-percent reduction in plastic waste leakage by 2030; thus, the city was chosen as WWF-PH's partner for this year.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[In climate push, German chemical maker swaps oil for sugar](#)

By: Jean-Philippe Lacour - Agence France-Presse

At one of Europe's largest chemical complexes, German group Covestro is trialling the manufacture of a key product using sugar as a base material instead of oil, as the industry seeks to reduce its carbon footprint.

The pilot project involves producing "aniline", a chemical used in making foams -- used widely in mattresses and armchairs, as well as building insulation.

While large-scale, commercial production is probably years away, the experiment marks a small step in the chemical industry's battle to slash carbon emissions as Earth faces a dire climate emergency.

Of the 100 million barrels of oil produced worldwide every day, "a quarter goes directly into the chemical industry," said Walter Leitner, from Aachen University, which has been involved in the aniline project for a decade.

"The chemical industry needs to be completely rebuilt."

Plastics manufacturer Covestro -- a former division of chemical giant Bayer -- started trials at its complex in the western city of Leverkusen at the end of 2023, after laboratory tests.

In a 100-square-metre (1,080-square-foot) room, aniline, a transparent fluid, is extracted from a 600-metre network of intertwined pipes.

Using a process developed by University of Stuttgart researchers, fermented sugar is treated with chemicals to make the product.

Aniline is used as the base ingredient for chemical MDI, which is an essential material in manufacturing foams.

Traditionally, aniline has been obtained from crude oil derivatives like naphtha and benzene, but producing it emits large quantities of carbon dioxide, a key greenhouse gas.

Around six million tonnes of aniline are produced globally a year, around one million tonnes of it by Covestro.

So far, the pilot project in Leverkusen produces just a tiny part of this, extracting just half a tonne of aniline a day.

Punishing energy costs

Some experts are sceptical about such an approach.

The use of plant matter in manufacturing may cut out fossil fuels but whether it can lead to carbon neutrality "is often questionable", Jens Guenther, from Germany's Federal Environment Agency, told AFP.

This is particularly the case when it comes to the use of "so-called cultivated biomass like maize, sugar cane and sugar beet," he said.

Janine Korduan, from environmental NGO BUND, pointed out that industrial agriculture generates "CO₂ and methane emissions through land conversion and the production of fertilisers and pesticides", and also leads to "major losses of biodiversity and high water consumption".

Nevertheless, Guenther said the use of plant matter in production processes would likely produce significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions than using fossil fuels, although opting for waste materials rather than crops produced in large-scale farming would be preferable.

Other German companies are experimenting in the area.

Chemical giant BASF is seeking to use organic waste, agricultural products or vegetable oils to produce basic chemicals like aniline.

There are many barriers to taking such projects further, however.

These range from the availability of the necessary organic matter, which is in great demand as the green transition gathers pace, to higher costs when compared to producing such chemicals with oil.

Scaling up the process will only be justified if it leads to "significant CO₂ savings" in the manufacturing process, said Thorsten Dreier, a member of Covestro's management board who is overseeing the technology.

There will also need to be proof that money "can be made in a competitive environment, in order to finance research here", he said.

And for Germany, a major challenge will be persuading manufacturers to set up costly new sites for processing chemicals.

The energy-intensive chemicals sector in Europe's top economy has been facing a crisis since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine curtailed cheap Russian gas imports, sending power costs soaring.

Many companies are now more focused on shifting production to cheaper locations overseas, rather than expanding at home.

"Energy costs in Germany are currently three to four times higher than in the United States," while a bloated bureaucracy is also weighing on industry, warned Dreier.

[MCIA commended for receiving the 'Carbon' accreditation](#)

By: Caecent No-ot Magumbol -

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia-Frasco has lauded the Mactan Cebu International Airport (MCIA) for its Carbon accredited status that paves the way for a cleaner, greener future in the aviation and tourism industry.

“Congratulations to Mactan International Airport for achieving the distinction of being the FIRST in the Philippines to attain ‘Airport Carbon Accredited’ status,” Frasco said in her Facebook post.

Based on information from the Airport Carbon Accreditation, MCIA has achieved level 1 mapping and is the Philippines’ first ever airport to join the airport carbon accreditation program programme.

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“Achieving Carbon Neutrality is a long journey that requires time, dedication, and innovation in our approach to reducing carbon emissions,” Titonis has said.

The Mactan Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA) also expressed how grateful they are to Sec. Frasco and her team for their support. MCIAA also looks forward to more collaborations with DOT.

DOT has a baseline target of 7.7 million arrivals this year after breaching its 4.8 million arrivals target in 2023 with 5.45 million international visitor arrivals.

For this year so far, the country has already recorded 1,227,815 international tourist arrivals from January to March 5, 2024.

Foreign tourist arrivals is at 1,160,129 or 94.49 percent and the rest are Overseas Filipinos (OFs).

In terms of international visitor arrivals, South Korea remains the country's top source market for visitors with 349,956 or 28.50 percent of the total arrivals, followed by the United States of America with 195,603 or 15.93 percent. It is then followed by China with 85,876; Japan with 73,159, and Canada with 50,555.

The rest in the top 10 list are arrivals from Australia with 50,488; Taiwan with 42,955; United Kingdom with 30,507; Singapore with 25,253; and Germany with 20,816.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Climate change body boosts policy-making partnership with academe](#)

By: Pot Chavez

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) is working on a collaboration project with research centers in the academe to help formulate policies to address environmental concerns.

In an interview, Secretary Robert Borje, the CCC's vice chairperson and executive director, said in a forum at the University of Santo Tomas (UST) on Friday that schools' resources can be effectively leveraged to advance efforts to mitigate climate change effects.

CCC is the lead policy-making body of the government tasked to coordinate, monitor and evaluate government programs and ensure mainstreaming of climate change in development plans.

"We are inviting [the University of Santo Tomas Research Center for Social Sciences and Education (RCSSSED)] to join consultations and with the brain power that you will be bringing, we will be in a much better place... this serves as a platform and brings academe closer to policy making," Borje told the Philippine News Agency.

He noted that his office is working to improve their planning that should be data-based and science-driven such that a shift from reaction to a proactive action is needed.

Borje attended the 2nd Policy Expo on Friday that was hosted by the UST-RCSSSED which was also participated in by students, researchers, academicians, and volunteer groups, among others.

With the theme, "Towards Security Solutions: Creating Strategic Intersections for Scholars and Bureaucrats", the policy exposition seeks to locate how scholars and research institutions can help government institutions in the pursuit of total security.

Borje said the event seeks to address the socio-economic and educational issues by providing researchers with a platform to use their findings into actionable recommendations for policy formulations.

He said the forum will pave the way for the use of research studies in the policies and documents such as the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP).

The national climate change framework strategy has been translated into NCCAP, which prioritizes food security, water sufficiency, ecological and environmental stability, human security, climate-smart industries and services, sustainable energy, and knowledge and capacity development.

Meanwhile, in a separate interview, Dr. Frederick Rey, project head of the 2nd Policy Expo, said the presence of the CCC shows thorough commitment in the power of science to provide backbone in the policy decisions.

“Public administration, management, and governance, in general, should be understood from a holistic perspective; it is not the exclusive domain of policy makers. The academe should extend an effort to reach out to our policy and decision makers to let institutions work together,” he said.

Rey, who is also a political sociologist and a researcher, said there is an evolving trend in the policy making in the government wherein experts are becoming more familiar with the need for evidence.

He said the universities in the country are a rich asset and a fertile ground for collaboration that must be maximized by national government agencies (NGAs) to empower itself.

“We are still looking for more partner agencies, we expect that the UST-RCSSSED will be constantly involved in shaping the policy narratives of the country such as climate change, food security, and technology.

We will be present to guide our policy makers in forging scientific and culturally rooted policies,” he added.

POLICE FILES TONITE

[Policy Expo 2024, tinalakay ang pagsisikap para solusyunan ang Climate Change at Food Security](#)

By: Jocelyn Domenden

Dahil sa lumalalang problema sa pagbabago ng klima, nakikipagtulongan ang Climate Change Commission sa ilang mga mananaliksik, akademya, at iba pang grupo upang maisakatuparan ang implimentasyon ng mga proyekto at polisiya sa pagtugon ng mga pangunahing alalahanin kaugnay sa nasabing usapin.

Sa ginanap na 2nd Policy Expo 2024 na pinangunahan ng UST- Research Center for Social Sciences and Education (RCSSSED) na may temang “Towards Security Solutions: Creating Strategic Intersections for Scholars and Bureaucrats”, hinikayat ni Vice Chairperson at Executive Director ng Climate Change Commission (CCC) Sec. Robert E.A. Borje ng lahat na maaring epektibong magamit ang mga school resources upang isulong ang mga pagsisikap na mabawasan ang mga epekto sa pagbabago ng klima.

Layon din ng nasabing exposition na magbigay-daan sa paggamit ng mga pag-aaral sa pananaliksik sa mga patakaran at dokumento tulad ng National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) at kung paano makakatulong ang mga iskolar at mga research institutions na matulungan ang mga government institutions sa paghahanap ng kabuuang seguridad.

Ayon kay Borje, sinisikap ng kanyang opisina na mapabuti ang kanilang pagpapalano na dapat ay bata sa datos at agham upang ang paglipat mula sa reaksyon tungo sa isang aktibong aksyon ay kailangan.

Binigyang-diin din ni Borje na mahalaga ang Bayanihan upang labanan ang Climate Change.

“Data will drive us to make the decision base on available science. So dapat we have more scientist, we encourage more people to understand the science and make it an ally not our host,” giit ni Borje.

Sinabi naman ni Dr. Frederick Rey, project head ng 2nd Policy Expo at isa ring political sociologist at researcher, na ang presensya ng CCC ay nagpapakita ng masusing pangako sa kapangyarihan ng agham na magbigay ng lakas sa mga desisyon sa mga policy decisions.

Mayroon na rin aniyang umuusbong na kalakaran sa paggawa ng patakaran sa gobyerno kung saan nagiging pamilyar ang mga eksperto sa pangangailangan ng ebidensya.

Umaasa rin ito na patuloy na makikibahagi ang UST-RCSSSED sa paghubog ng mga policy narratives ng bansa tulad ng climate change, food security at technology habang patuloy na naghahanap ng mas maraming katuwang na ahensya.

Bukod kay Sec. Borje, nagsilbi din na guest speaker sa unang araw ng nasabing forum sina Program Officer for the Center for Liberalism and Democracy PJ Leynes at si AGRI Party list Representative Cong. Wilbert Lee.

FOOD SECURITY

Samantala, ibinahagi ni AGRI Party List Representatives Cong. Wilbert Lee, na magiging prayoridad ang kapakanan at Karapatan ng mga magsasaka at mangingisda dahil sila ang mas higit na nagsasakripisyo para matugunan ang food security sa bansa.

Ayon kay Rep. Lee, bagama't sinabi aniya ng Department of Agriculture na may higit sa sapat na suplay ng pagkain ngunit paalala niya na huwag nang hintayin pa na tumigil ang mga magsasaka sa pagtanim o dumating ang panahon na wala nang magsasaka dahil ayaw na magsaka.

“50 years old ang average ng ating farmers ngayon—in ten or 15 years from now kung wala tayong makuhang Kabataan na sumunod diyan wala na”.

Sa naturang forum, sinabi rin ni Lee na may mga program na humihikayat sa mga Kabataan na pumasok sa pagsasaka ng makabuluhan.

“Ang food security natin should be strengthen through the help of you, youth and students. Kailangan po natin na palakasin, kailangan hikayatin ang mga kabataan na pumasok sa agrikultura”, saad ni Lee.

REMATE

Bayanihan lunas sa lumalalang Climate Change

By: Jay Reyes

“SAMA-SAMA tayo, isa lang ang kalaban natin, ang kalaban natin ay ang climate change.”

Ito ang panawagan ni Vice Chairperson at Executive Director ng Climate Change Commission (CCC) na si Sec. Robert E.A. Borje makaraang magsilbi itong pangunahing tagapagsalita sa ginanap na Policy Expo 2024 forum sa University of Santo Tomas (UST) nitong Biyernes, Marso 8.

“Yung mensahe na bayanihan is not just a phrase, it’s the action call. Kase kung magkakawatak-watak tayo, magkanya-kanya tayo, the private sector, the public sector, the academe, the communities, the youth, pag magaway-away kayo walang mangyayari. lisa lang ang kalaban natin, ang kalaban natin ay climate change,” ani Borje.

“Isa pang mensahe kaya nandito ako sa UST, huwag kayong matakot sa data, huwag kayo matakot sa agham. Ang agham ang makakatulong sa atin para masolusyunan ang problema ng climate change. Data will drive us to make the decision base on available science. So dapat we have more scientist, we encourage more people to understand the science and make it an ally not our host,” dagdag pa ng kalihim.

Dumalo si Borje sa 2nd Policy Expo na pinangunahan ng UST- Research Center for Social Sciences and Education (RCSSSED) na may temang “Towards Security Solutions: Creating Strategic Intersections for Scholars and Bureaucrats” na nilahukan din ng mga mag-aaral, mananaliksik, akademya, mga boluntaryong grupo, at iba pa.

Layon ng nasabing exposition na mahanap kung paano makakatulong ang mga iskolar at mga research institutions na matulungan ang mga government institutions sa paghahanap ng kabuuang seguridad.

Samantala, sinabi naman ni Dr. Frederick Rey, project head ng 2nd Policy Expo at isa ring political sociologist at researcher, mayroong umuusbong na kalakaran sa paggawa ng patakaran sa gobyerno kung saan nagiging pamilyar ang mga eksperto sa pangangailangan ng ebidensya.

Aniya, ang mga unibersidad sa bansa ay dapat i-maximize ng mga national government agencies (NGAs) para bigyan ng pagkakataon ang mga ito na makatulong sa gobyerno.

“We are still looking for more partner agencies, we expect that the UST-RCSSSED will be constantly involved in shaping the policy narratives of the country such as climate change, food security, and technology. We will be present to guide our policy makers in forging scientific and culturally rooted policies,” ani Dr. Rey.

Bukod kay Sec. Borje, nagsilbi din na guest speaker sa unang araw ng nasabing forum sina Program Officer for the Center for Liberalism and Democracy PJ Leynes at si AGRI Party list Representative Cong. Wilbert Lee.

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